

# *The Christian Triumph :*

OR, THE  
**D U T Y**  
OF

Praying for our Enemies,

Illustrated and Enforc'd from our Blessed  
SAVIOUR's Example on the Cross.

IN A  
**S E R M O N**

Preach'd at

S. Saviour's in Southwark.

On Palm-Sunday, 1713.

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By HENRY SACHEVERELL, D. D.

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London, Printed by G. James, for HENRY CLEMENTS, at the  
Half-Moon in S. Paul's Church-yard. M DCC XIII.

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(Price Three Pence)

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S. LUKE xxiii. 34.

*Then said Jesus, Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.*



In this Day the Blessed Redeemer of the World, to fulfil the Predictions of the Prophets, rode in Solemnity to *Jerusalem*, accompanied with the Shouts and Acclamations of the People, proclaiming both His Majesty and Divinity. But this short Pomp was only to lead the Fatal Way to His Execution; *Hosannah to the Son of David* was to be chang'd into *Crucify Him, Crucify Him*; That ungrateful and cruel City, in which *He went about doing Good*, and for the Conversion of which He had wrought so many Miracles, was now, on the View of its impending Ruin, water'd with His Tears, only in order to be drench'd in His Blood: and that which had been so long the Slaughter-House of the Prophets, was to complete the Measure of its Iniquity, with the Barbarous Murder of the Last and Greatest, the *Messiah*. For our Meditations upon which mournful Subject, the Church having set apart this Holy Week; I shall treat upon the sublimest Act of His Passion, His Dying Prayer on the Cross, to teach us to follow the Great Example of His Humility, Patience, and most Extensive Charity.

It is the peculiar Honour and Privilege of that Religion which He thus seal'd with His Blood, not only to propose to the World a Body of Laws exceeding all Others, in Raising humane Nature to its highest Dignity and Perfection; but also to prevent all Cavils about the Difficulty of Obedience to it, by *Appealing* to that consummate and visible Demonstration of it in the Person of the Legislator Himself. All other Institutions of Morality fell as much short of this Recommendation, as even their Compilers did of those faint Rules of Virtue they enjoyn'd their Proselytes. Even *Moses*, who receiv'd his Revelation immediately from God, whom he had the Honour to converse with, *Face to Face*, stands recorded in his own History for a sad Monument of humane Frailty, an Exception to his own meek Character, and as 'twere a Blot upon that *Holy Table* he himself deliver'd. But in the Gospel, and its *Blessed Author*, there shines such a mutual Harmony and Consent, that the Doctrine is always legible in the Performance, and His Actions are the best Comment on His Religion; He is a Prophet, as Mighty in Deed as in Word; He is both the *Way* and the *Light*, the *Road* and the *Guide*, the *Precept* and the *Example*, and in a mysterious *Hypostatic Union*, Himself both as God commanding *Man*, and as *Man* perfectly obeying God. As His whole Life was but one continued Proof of the Reason and Equity of His Injunctions, so He seems in His Death to have carried the Practice of them to the most exalted and transcendent Pitch. Here that Patience and Meekness, that Humility and Condescension, that Constancy and Perseverance, that entire Submission to the Divine Will, that tender Love towards the worst of Enemies, in Forgiving and Praying for them, which He strictly prescribes His Followers, were most eminently conspicuous in our Lord and Master. Innocence and Virtue never appear with such Lustre and Advantage, as when they are shaded with Adversity and Oppression. The Cross was the proper Place from whence its Doctrines were to be deliver'd; and whilst our

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Saviour hung extended upon it, His Body seem'd to Preach as effectually as His Soul, and every Bleeding Wound pour'd forth the most Moving Arguments to recommend to Others that *Bitter Cup*, which He Himself so plentifully drank of. Under this Humble and most Sorrowful Condition, that Humane Nature, loaden with the most exquisite Pain and Misery, can sustain, He gives the *Finishing Stroke* ( tho' in a different Sense ) to His *Life*, and *Gospel* at once, and bequeaths this His *Dying Legacy* to the World, as the Highest Blessing He could leave it, and the most Endearing Pledge of His Love, in this Pathetical Ejaculation for His Implacable Murderers; *Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.*

These Words may be consider'd not only in *Particular*, as a *Deprecatory Prayer* of our Blessed Lord, utter'd on His Crucifixion in behalf of those malicious *Jews*, who had now brought Him to this ignominious and undeserved, tho' meritorious Death, that God would forgive them this horrid Fact, as *Sinning out of Ignorance*; but must be understood in His *Example* to contain and prescribe a *General Duty* to the Imitation of all His Disciples, of *Praying for their Enemies at all Times*, and under all the most oppressive *Circumstances*. Which great and sublime Duty, as He first *Preach'd* it on the *Mount*, and now Practis'd it on the *Cross*, being the Perfection of Christianity, and the most elevated Strain of *Heroic Piety*, fit to crown, and conclude the Life and Actions of the World's Redeemer; I shall from hence endeavour to *state, explain, and enforce* from all the most weighty *Motives*, and *Arguments* it is built upon. And,

I. *First.* I shall shew wherein the Duty of Praying for our Enemies consists, as consider'd in it self, together with what it antecedently implies, and presupposes.

II. *Secondly.* I shall endeavour to illustrate it from the Example of our Blessed Saviour view'd under all its sad Aggravations, and instructive Circumstances.

III. *Thirdly.* I shall settle its just Extent and Obligation, answering those Objections it may seem liable to, and prescribing it within those Limitations and Restrictions it must admit of.

IV. *Fourthly.* I shall produce the Reasons and Motives upon which this Duty is founded, with a particular View to that contain'd in the Text.

But before I enter upon the Prosecution of this Matter, it may be previously requisite to observe,

1. Why our Blessed Lord addresses Himself to God in the Appellation of *Father*.

2. Why He prays to His Father for that which seems to have been in His own Power to have perform'd.

1. And first, it is remarkable that this Appellation of *Father* seems, by the frequent Repetition of it, in almost all our Saviour's Prayers, to be that which He chiefly delighted in; and may here be suppos'd to be more particularly made use of upon a double Account. 1. In Respect of His *Divinity*; because as our Blessed Lord was the *only begotten Son of God*, now offering Himself upon the Cross, as an Oblation and Sacrifice for the Sins of the whole World, He may seem to plead by Virtue of His *Filiation*, for the Efficacy and Satisfaction of that great Atonement He was now making even for His worst Enemies; herein reconciling them, and all Mankind to God the Father, to whom they had forfeited that merciful and glorious *Relation*, by Rebellion and Apostacy, and to which they were now to be restor'd by that *Mysterious Adoption*

*Adoption* which was to be obtain'd through the Merits of His Blood ; and thus as God the Son, He addresses Himself to God the Father. 2. With Respect to His Humanity ; as He was here the great Founder and Type of His Church, reconciling it not only to God, but by this Blessed Example of the most astonishing Charity, reconciling all its Members one to another, teaching them not only to forgive each other their Offences, but in humble Imitation of Himself, to become as it were Saviours ( tho' in a very inferiour Sense ) to one another, interceding to God for their most implacable Enemies. From whence we may draw a clear Solution to the second Observation ; namely,

2. Why our Blessed Lord here prays to His Father for that which seem'd in His own Power to perform, to wit, that tho' He was very God, and had the Power of Remission of Sins, as well upon the Cross as in other Places, as He Himself testify'd and practis'd, and might freely, and from Himself spontaneously have absolv'd them, without any farther Intercession ; yet as He was now both Priest and Sacrifice too, it became Him, having not as yet perfected the great Work of our Redemption, not to pronounce Pardon in an Authoritative Manner, but by Way of Petition, and Supplication, to implore the Divine Mercy for His Persecutors. *He did not* ( says St. Chrysostom ) *pray to the Father as if He could not Himself absolve them from that great Transgression* ; but that He might instruct us not only by Word, but also by Example, to pray for our Persecutors. Had He not deliver'd this charitable Intercession in the midst of His Agonies, the Jewish Spectators might have taken Occasion to revile His Doctrine. Those sworn and pestilent Enemies of it, the Scribes and Pharisees, might have retorted that sharp Invective upon Him ; *Do not after His Works, for this Man sayeth and doth not ; He binds heavy Burdens, and grievous to be born, and layeth them on Mens Shoulders, but He Himself will not move them with one of His Fingers.* He imposes, S. Matth. xxiii. 3, 4. upon us, as are altogether unreasonable and impracticable. But here was an Appeal to the Senses for the Truth of His Doctrine ; here was an Argument that even the Obstinacy and Infidelity of a bigotted and wayward Few could not withstand, that struck all His Adversaries dumb, and left the World without Excuse, if they did not follow the Great Pattern set before them, or should refuse to do, and suffer, what even the Son of God did not disdain to submit to.

Having thus cleared the Way to the Duty contained in the Text, by premising these necessary Observations ; I proceed now,

I. First to show wherein the Duty of Praying for our Enemies consists, as consider'd in itself, together with what it antecedently implies and presupposes.

Now, before any Person can be suppos'd to pray at all for *Another*, it must be taken for granted, that he is in *Perfect Charity* with him himself ; that he has not only entirely discarded all Resentment of any Injuries, and Wrongs, Affronts, and Abuses of all Kinds, that he may possibly have received from him in a State of Enmity, but also so clearly to have purg'd his Soul of the whole *Leaven of Malice*, that the very Seeds and Principles of Rancour and Revenge lie dead and buried within him. Otherwise, what a provoking Affront does he himself offer to God, who dares thus hypocritically to *mock Him with his Lips*, when *his Heart is thus far from Him* ? Who comes with a Mouth breathing forth the gentle Spirit of Charity and Forgiveness, and has nothing but Hatred and Vengeance raging in his Breast ? Who pretends to reconcile *Another unto God*, to whom he is not reconcil'd *himself* ? This is such abominable Prevarication with our Omnipotent Maker, and Searcher of our Hearts, that 'tis to be hop'd, Nothing professing the Name of a Christian, or that believes there

there is that God he pretends to invoke, can possibly be guilty of. But not only these real, inward Instances of our sincere Charity are requir'd to qualify us to intercede for our Enemy, but before we can put up our Petitions to Heaven for him, we must have express'd it in all our outward Actions towards him here on Earth, and not think lazily to shift off our Duty on God, and to relieve our Adversary with empty Words and Ejaculations, instead of actual Demonstrations of our Kindness, and Compassion. It is not sufficient to requite his Curses with Blessings, his Slanders with Compliments, and his Reproaches with Civility; but Do's he hunger? we must feed him; Do's he thirst? we must give him drink; Is he naked? we must cloath him; Is he in Distress, Danger, or Difficulty? we must assist, advise, and rescue him; And in a word, contribute, to the utmost of our Power, to the Benefit or Advantage of his Soul, and Body, Life, Estate, Reputation, or Family. And this too, without Grudging as of Necessity, without insulting or upbraiding his Errors or Misfortunes, or setting the least Merit on our own charitable Performances. Now, when a Man has thus generously acquitted himself here Below, in all the real Offices of Love and Humanity to his Enemy, he may then, and not before, presume to solicit his Cause in the Court Above; where he is to present him under the threefold Respect of a Sinner against God, a Sinner against ourselves, and as reconcileable to both. And upon these Accounts, we are oblig'd to pray, First, For his Pardon for all his *actual*, or *intended* Injuries, with a Request that our Remission may be accepted by God as a Means, or Motive at least to obtain His. Secondly, that God would turn his Heart, take away his Prejudices, and reconcile him to us by his Spirit of Love, Unity, and Concord. Thirdly, That thus being fully pardon'd by God and Man, he may be blessed by both, in all Happiness, Spiritual and Temporal. These are the Antecedent Conditions requisite to, and the Substance of this Duty of Praying for our Enemies, which if so fully and truly perform'd, with such pious, heavenly, and endearing Dispositions of Soul, cannot but be highly pleasing to God, as most agreeable to His Blessed Nature, and that Wisdom of Meekness that cometh from Above, which

S. Jam. iii. 17. is pure, peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of Mercy and good Fruits, without Partiality, and without Hypocrisy. But this Duty will appear in its most Glorious Light; if we come,

II. Secondly. To illustrate it from the Example of our Blessed Saviour, view'd under all its sad Aggravations, and instructive Circumstances.

Tho' the whole Life of our Blessed Lord, from His Birth in the Manger till His Death upon the Cross, was but one continued Demonstration of His Doctrine of Patience under Injuries, and Love towards Enemies; yet since the Time would fail me to trace through all that melancholy Series of Troubles and Disasters, consisting of such Variety of Afflictions, as befell the most oppressed Innocence, labouring under the most extreme Hardships of Poverty, Disgrace, and Persecution; I shall confine my Observations chiefly to the History of this Day's Gospel, that we may practise the Precept of the Epistle,

that this Mind may be in you, which was also in Christ  
 Phil. ii. 5. Jesus, who being in the Form of God, thought it not Robbery to be Equal with God, but made Himself of no Reputation, and took upon Him the Form of a Servant, and was made in the Likeness of Men; and being found in Fashion as a Man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto Death, even the Death of the Cross. For the Son of God to die like a common Mortal, seems a sufficient Humiliation; but to die for our Sins, such a shameful, bitter, and accursed Death, with all the horrible and reproachful Circumstances attending it, was enough to have shock'd

shock'd Reason, and confounded *Humane Nature*, had it not been supported by the Union of the *Divine*. And here let us contemplate the Blessed *Jesus* in the three last disconsolate and dismal Scenes of His Life.

1. Under His Seizure on *Mount Olivet*.
2. Under His Arraignment in the *Judgment-Hall*.
3. Under His Execution on *Mount Calvary*.

And take along with us, in our Observations, His Threefold Character answering to these Three great Actions.

1. That He was the greatest Benefactor to Mankind the World ever receiv'd.
2. That He was the most innocent Person that was ever try'd, and yet condemn'd as a Malefactor.
3. That He was their King, Priest, and Prophet, the *Messiah*, and only Son of God.

These Contraries being set in Opposition to each other, will render this Divine Example more illustrious; it will make it shine out in its full Glory, on the Comparison of the most Execrable Provocations of His *Enemies* on the One hand, and the no less Adorable Patience of *Christ* on the Other.

1. Behold, then, our Blessed Lord prostrate on the *Mount*, interceding with His Incens'd Father for the Redemption of the World; and with such earnest Importunity, with such strong *Cryin?* and *Tears*, pressing His Requests, that in this convulsive Agony and Pang of Devotion, His Soul is said to be exceeding sorrowful even unto Death, to be surrounded with Grief, and cast into such violent *Consternation*, as to open all the Pores of His Body, and to make it to sweat great Drops of Blood falling down to the Ground. Whilst He is thus labouring for our Salvation, see Him betray'd by one of His own Disciples into the Hands of those ungrateful Jews, who had been fed with His Miracles, heal'd by His Touch, dispossess'd with His Voice, and instructed with His Doctrine; and against whom He might have commanded down Legions of Angels to His Rescue and Their Destruction. Yet, when He might have struck them down by the Majesty of His Look (as S. John says) not to the Ground only, but into their very Graves, instead of taking Vengeance on them, He salutes the very Traitor by c. xviii. the Name of a Friend, and works a Miracle to cure the wounded ver. 6. Ear of one of His Assassins. Well might He have said, *For which of my good Deeds are ye come out with Swords and Staves, as against a Thief, to take Me?*

2. From the *Mount*, let us next attend Him to the *Judgment-Hall*; where we find Him Deny'd by One, Forsaken by All His Disciples, and left in the midst of His most implacable Enemies, thirsting for that precious Blood they had so long conspired against. After He is hurry'd from *Caiaphas* to *Pilate*, from *Pilate* to *Herod*, and from *Herod* to *Pilate* again, He is at last brought to a Mock-Tribunal of Justice, arraign'd as the Worst of Criminals, accus'd as a Transgressor of all Laws *Humane* and *Divine*, as a Preacher of Sedition and Treason, perverting with false Doctrine the People from their Allegiance to their Lawful Sovereign, denying Tribute to *Cæsar*, having a Design upon the Crown, usurping Royal Authority, and the Title of a King, intending to overthrow their Temple and Religion, and being guilty of the most execrable Blasphemy in assuming the Prerogatives of God; and, in a word, render'd as black in all His Character, as the Envy and Virulence of His Perjur'd Accusers, or the Malice of the Devil could represent Him. And at last, tho' not Convict'd, He is Condemn'd, against the Will, Conscience, nay Confession of His corrupted Judge, and a Sentence Extorted upon Him, to satisfy the Outrage and Clamours of a Mad Sanhedrim.

3. Come we now to the concluding Scene of this astonishing Tragedy. After the Preference of a most Notorious Robber before Him, and the Shame and Ignominy wherewith they had vex'd His righteous Soul; the Tortures they inflicted on His tender Body, were no less full of Pain and Disgrace. After the Flowers had plow'd on His Back, and furrow'd it with those bloody Stripes by which we are heal'd; behold Him array'd in the Mock-Majesty of a King, His sacred Temples crown'd with a Sharp Diadem of Thorns, His Hand fill'd with a Reed for a Ludicrous Scepter, His Body in Ridicule cover'd with an Imperial Robe, His Face spit upon whilst the Knee is bow'd to Him, and His Holy Head bruis'd with the Ensigns of His own Dominion. This was only preparing and dressing the Sacrifice for the Altar; where, Lo! the innocent Victim is now laid, Oppress'd, Afflicted, Bleeding, Dying.

*Isa. lxxii. 7. He is brought as a Lamb to the Slaughter, and as a Sheep before her Shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His Mouth.* Let us with the Eyes of Faith contemplate here the Redeemer of the World stretch'd out on the Cross, and hanging upon His own Wounds betwixt Thieves, having all his Senses exercised with the most exquisite Torments, His Head pierc'd with Thorns, His Hands and Feet with Nails, His Side with a Spear, His Mouth fill'd with Gall and Vinegar, His Ears with Taunts and Reproaches on His Divinity, and His Eyes with the Insolence, Contempt, and Derision of his Persecutors; and above all these, the unknown, inexpressible, nay inconceivable Sufferings of His Soul. Surely, in the midst of such Pain and Misery, Humane Nature might be allow'd a little to murmur, and complain, and vent its Passion and Resentment upon such inhumane and cruel Enemies: Yet *He openeth not His Mouth*, unless it be in *Blessings*, and in this compassionate Prayer for their Pardon; *Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.* Thus fulfilling that remarkable Prophecy of Him, *He hath*

*Isa. lxxii. 12. poured out His Soul unto Death, and He was numbered with the Transgressors, and he bare the Sins of many, and made Intercession for the Transgressors.*

Now, can we without Concern hear these last Words, and remember the exceeding great Love of our Master and only Saviour Jesus Christ thus dying for us, and the innumerable Benefits which, by His Precious Blood-shedding, He hath obtain'd to us, and not reflect that those Things are written for our Instruction, that the same Mind should be in us that was in Christ Jesus, that we are to take up our Cross, and follow our Crucified Redeemer in this glorious Example of Charity; that we should do as He has done to us; that with the same Patience and Long-suffering, the same Calmness and Serenity, the same Meekness and Pity, the same Love and extensive Benevolence,

*Heb. xiii. 1. we should treat our most inveterate Adversaries: Looking unto the*

*2. Blessed Jesus the Author and Finisher of our Faith, who, for the Joy that was set before Him, endured the Cross, despising the Shame, and is set down at the Right Hand of the Throne of God, who, as He was reconcil'd to us when we were Enemies unto Him, so are we bound to consider Him who endur'd such Contradiction of Sinners against Himself, that we be not wearied, and faint in our Minds in the Practice of this difficult and excellent Duty. For even hereunto are we call'd, because also Christ*

*1 Pet. ii. suffered for us, leaving us an Example, that we should follow*

*21. His Steps; who did no Sin, neither was Guile found in His Mouth; who when He was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffer'd, He threatened not, but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously, His Soul expiring in Prayer for His Enemies.*

After such a moving Example, so full of all the Force of Reason and Eloquence, visibly setting forth the Nature in the Practice of this Duty,

In every Particular, under such horrid Circumstances and Aggravations, as can scarce be the Lot of any other Person besides the Son of God ; can there remain the least Shadow of an Objection to deter us from the humble Imitation of it, as far as the common Conditions of our Lives may require ? It may possibly be pleaded, in Excuse, That *Jesus Christ* being the Son of God, and endowed with all the Powers of the Divinity ; and having all the Graces of the Holy Ghost dwelling in Him, with the Fulness of the Godhead Bodily, was thereby enabl'd to rise to the utmost Pitch of this Heroic Duty ; but that meer Man, Flesh and Blood, with all its Infirmities about it, cannot come up to this perfect Man, this Measure of the Stature of the Fulness of Christ. It must indeed be confess'd, that this is a Duty of such an exalted Strain, as cannot easily be attain'd to without much Reluctance of Humane Nature in its corrupted State ; that it will require the utmost Efforts of Reason, assisted with great Degrees and Succours of the Divine Grace, to raise the Soul to this Dispassionate, Mortify'd, and Self-denying Temper, which nothing but an habitual Application to God in continual Prayer, can accomplish. But however, we must also remember, that our Saviour, as Man, was surrounded with all the Infirmities of our Nature, Sin only excepted ; that He had a much quicker Sense of Sufferings, of Shame, Pain, and Afflictions, than we possibly can have. So that, tho' we cannot presume to arrive at that Perfection of Divine Grace and Charity he did ; yet that every good Christian, who sincerely endeavours to follow his unparallel'd Example, shall be enabl'd to do what is acceptable to God through Him, towards it ; and that the blessed Spirit, who never fails to hear, and assist our Devotions under all Difficulties, will not be wanting in this pressing one, is most indisputably certain. But because we are apt to lay hold on any Excuses to shift off our Duty, as well as to mistake in our right Apprehensions of it, I proceed to my third general Head ; namely,

III. To settle its Just Extent and Obligations, and to answer those Objections it may seem liable to, and to prescribe it within those Limitations and Restrictions it must admit of. *This is a hard Saying, who can bear it ?* says the Man of Honour, that measures his Duty by his Sword, and had rather sacrifice his Soul than his Revenge. If this is our indispensable Duty ; such foolish Clemency, say they, will but encourage the Malice of our Enemies, and lay ourselves open and unguarded to their Assaults. Besides that, it seems to intrench upon, or supersede the Fundamental Law of Nature, Self-preservation ; and to betray our Persons, Rights, and Properties to the Abuse, Violence, or Usurpation of any Bold or Impious Invader. Such Mercy and Impunity seems contradictory both to Law and Reason, by Supposing Courts of Judicature Unnecessary, if not Illegal in their Use, and so deprives us of the Assistance of Justice, and not only tends to the Loss of Private Persons, but to the Disadvantage of the Publick. Either we cannot right ourselves in the Prosecution of an Enemy, or this Duty seems inconsistent with it, that we should hypocritically pretend to pray for the Pardon of him against whom we are actually engag'd. In answser to this, 'tis sufficient to say, That *Christian Charity* does not in the least debar us from any of the Just Privileges of Humane Nature, neither does it forbid us, as Men, to use any Methods of Lawful Defence, to guard and secure our Lives, Liberties, and Estates from Danger, Rapine, and Oppression ; That it is not only consistent with, but establishes the Rules of Justice, Equity and Law. Which will fully and evidently appear, if we carefully distinguish betwixt *Acts of Private Revenge*, and *Acts of Publick Justice*. The former of which are utterly repugnant to all Religion, and particularly to this Duty of Praying for our Ennemis, for it would turn our

*very Prayers into Sin,* (as I have shew'd before) but with the *Latter* it is highly Reconcileable. To make this Matter clear, we must consider our Enemies under a double Regard.

1. As they relate to us in Particular.
2. As they relate to the Publick; the Church, or State.

1. As they relate to us in Particular, we must distinguish betwixt our Enemy's Person and his Actions. The *One* is inviolable, and we are oblig'd not only to treat it without Anger and Passion, so as, if possible, to win and reclaim him by Kindness and Condescension, but always to pray for him, under the very worst Condition of Hostility. And this we may do, and yet endeavour to redress the *Other* by all *Legal Means*, without Hatred or Revenge, with a Forgiving and Placable Temper, not so much to gratify our own Spleen, as to repair the Injury with the least Inconvenience we can to our Adversary, and to receive his Wrongs and Abuses, rather with Pity and Compassion, than Resentment and Indignation. Thus far our Religion obliges to go, to labour with God and Man for the Conversion of our Enemies; and, *as much as lieth in us, to live peaceably with All Men.*

But some, out of a mistaken Notion of *Christian Charity*, would carry this sublime Duty to a Pitch, that neither Reason nor Religion justifies, and which, indeed, is so far from both, as to be utterly inconsistent with *Common Sense* and *Prudence*; I mean, that wretched Folly and Credulity of *Trusting our Enemies*, (an Act of Favour due only, under that Supreme Being we are always to confide in, to our very best and most approved Friends) as if we could shew our Reconciliation by nothing, but hazarding our Ruin, and our only way to demonstrate our Love to our Enemies were in an utter Hazard to ourselves. This may indeed proceed from the *Innocency of the Dove*, but certainly is without the Caution and *Wisdom of the Serpent*. Hear the Son of

*Sirach* speaking from the History, and Experience of the

*Eccl. xii. 10, &c.* World. *Never trust thine Enemy* (says he) *for like as Iron rusteth, so is his Wickedness.* *Tho' he humble himself and go crouching, yet take good Heed, and beware of him; and thou shalt be unto him, as if thou hadst swip'd a Looking-Glass, and thou shalt know that his Rust hath not been altogether swip'd away; set him not by thee, lest when he hath overthrown thee, he stand up in thy Place:* *Neither let him sit at thy Right Hand, lest he seek to take thy Seat, and thou at the last remember my Words, and be pricked therewith.* An Enemy speaketh sweetly with his Lips, but in his Heart he imagineth how to throw thee into a Pit; he will weep with his Eyes, but if he find Opportunity, he will not be satisfied with Blood. If Adversity come upon thee, thou shalt find him there first; and tho' he pretend to help thee, yet shall he undermine thee. He will shake his Head, and clap his Hands, and whisper much, and change his Countenance. No Religion surely obliges us to expose ourselves to our Enemies; we may Pray for them without putting our Lives and Fortunes into those Hands, which, perhaps, want only an Opportunity to thrust a Dagger into our Hearts. We may beg Mercy for them from God, without laying ourselves at their Mercy; which generally will be found to be Cruel.

2. Secondly, we are to consider our Enemies, as they relate to the Publick; the Church or State. With Regard to which it may be asserted as an undoubted Maxim, that this *Christian Charity* does by no means interfere with, or extend itself to the Disadvantage of Publick Justice, or any way oblige Magistrates, or Persons in Authority, to forgive Criminals, or pass by Offences that violate the Common Peace, or break in upon the Laws of Societies, and demand Publick Restraint and Correction. To these, as properly the immediate Vice-Gorents of God Himself, *Vengeance belongeth, and they bear the Sword*

*Sword in vain;* if they Neglect their Duty, and Betray their Trust and Jurisdiction in a cowardly Connivance at, or Impunity of such Malefactors, as are a *Reproach to the Nation.* Where Religion, or Government is Assaulted by *III Principles,* or *Rebellious Practices,* 'tis the *Ministers and Magistrates Duty* to stand up and fence against Both ; and pronounce, and execute Wrath against them ; and 'tis no less the Duty of every private Subject to assist them with their *Prayers,* and to implore Justice upon such *Enemies of God and our Country.* And tho', at the same time, we pray for their *Conversion,* as well as *Detection,* we must remember we are bound by a *Superiorour Rule of Charity,* and Duty to the *Constitution,* of which we are *Members,* to beseech God, in the Excellent Words of our Church, to *Abate their Pride, Affwaze their Malice, and Confound their Devices;* still Confining our Desires to the *General Good,* without any secret or bye Respect to ourselves, and, as much as we can, Distinguishing *their Malice from their Persons;* which if they will not take Care to separate likewise themselves, we must leave them to the Disposal of *Divine Providence,* and the Determinations of *Humane Justice.*

To proceed. To avoid farther Mistakes in this Matter, we are not to strain this Rule of Charity to our Enemies, so far as to exclude these following Limitations ; in all which Cases, I take it not only to be *lawful,* but even an *Act* of the most Religious Charity to pray to God to call our Enemies to Account, if nothing else will convert them.

1. That by this Means they may be brought to Shame, and a due Sense of their Crimes ; and compell'd to acknowledge and re-pent of their Faults, as *David* prays, *Fill their Faces Psal. lxxxiii. 16. with Shame, that they may seek Thy Name, O Lord,*

2. That our own Innocence, which has been wounded by unjust Slanders, may be clear'd and vindicated to the World.

3. That the Soul of the injurious Person may be sav'd and restor'd by the Sufferings of the Body, and by a Temporal Punishment he may be brought to avoid an Eternal One ; lest if he be suffer'd to go on without Controul in the Career of his Sins, he may fill up the Measure of them, and so end in a final Obduracy and Impenitency.

4. To prevent and avoid Scandal ; for which End Excommunications and Ecclesiastical Censures are inflicted, *to deliver such an one to Satan for the Destruction of the Flesh, that the Spirit may I Cor. v. 5. be sav'd in the Day of the Lord Jesus,* as the Apostle says.

Under which Sentence if our Enemy justly lies, obstinately Despising and Defying the Authority and Admonition of the Church, he shuts himself out of its Pale, cuts himself off from the Body of Christ, and becomes unto us an *Heathen Man and a Publican.* For such a desperate proscrib'd Apostate we may indeed mourn as *David* did for *Saul* ; but whether this is not a *Sin unto Death,* which not only forfeits, but evacuates our Prayers, may be doubted : And therefore, as *S. John* says, *I do not say that we should pray for it.* Our Petitions may be vain and *I Epist. v. 16. fruitless, as God says to the Prophet *Jeremy* ; Pray not thou*

*for this People, neither lift up Cry nor Prayer for them, neither make Intercession to me, for I will not hear thee, vii. 6.* However if this is an Error, 'tis an Error on the Side of Charity to pray for such *Self-condemn'd Miscreants;* that if possible they may be sav'd by some Temporal Visitation on them in this Life.

Under these Limitations and Restrictions, I suppose it not only consistent with, but to be a very kind *Act* of Charity to our Enemies to beseech God, by the Methods of his Providence, for such good Ends, to bring them to Repentance. But in respect of our own *Private Revenge,* we ought not in any Case whatsoever

soever to pray God to visit their Offences ; but like our Saviour in the Text, to pray that they may be blotted out of his Book of Remembrance, that they may never rise in Judgment against them here, or Condemnation of them hereafter.

Now, to all that has been said it may yet be objected, that this Praying for our Enemies shows indeed a very meek, merciful, and good-natur'd Disposition, and may look very well in a Christian Character ; but that we have the Examples of very Great, and allowedly Good Men, to the direct contrary, and that not only under the Legal, but the Gospel Oeconomy also. Moses, the meekest Man on Earth was so highly provok'd by the sacrilegious Usurpation and Schism of Corah, Dathan, and Abiram, that he utter'd such an Imprecation against them as sent them down quick into Hell, and made them the most dreadful Examples to all Posterity of the Heinousness of their Sins. David, the Man after God's own Heart, the most mild and gracious Prince that ever had then reign'd, has left us the most bitter Catalogue of Curses on his Enemies in several of the Psalms, and particularly the 69th and 109th, that the most ingenious Revenge could invent. Did not Elijah's Prayer bring down Fire from Heaven to avenge, instead of Mercy to forgive, his Enemies ? And did not Elisha send Wild Bears, instead of Blessings, to his Mockers ? Does not the Angel of the Lord himself not only curse, but give an express Warrant to others to Curse the Inhabitants of Meroz ? And are not the Writings of the Prophets full of such dire Imprecations against the Enemies of God and Religion ? But however these uncharitable Maledictions might perhaps be thought to comport well enough with the State of the Jewish Law, wherein God Almighty condescended to permit many Things for the Hardness of their Hearts ; yet this would not be allow'd under the Purity of the Evangelical Dispensation. Let us hear therefore what that says. Why says our Blessed Saviour, Bless those that curse you, and pray for those that despitefully use you, and persecute you. And yet how many Woes and Execrations did He pronounce against the Scribes and Pharisees ? S. Paul says, Being revil'd, we bless ; being persecuted, we suffer it. Yet does not the same Apostle

*Gal. v. 12.* strike the Sorcerer Elymas with Blindness ? And does he not say, I would they were even cut off that trouble you ; and *2 Tim. iv. 14.* Alexander the Coppersmith did me much Evil, the Lord reward him according to his Works. And did he not deliver over the Incestuous Person, and Hymenaeus, and Philetus to *1 Epist. iii. 9.* Satan for their Blasphemy ? S. Peter commands us not to render Evil for Evil, or Railing for Railing, but contrarywise Blessing ; and yet we know the same Apostle struck Ananias and Sapphira dead upon the Spot for a Lye, and curs'd Simon Magus to perish with his mercenary Offering. Are not now these Examples of such great Heroes in Religion sufficient to cancel this Duty of Praying for our Enemies, if not to justify the contrary Practice ?

This very plausible Objection, which I have stated in its full Length, that it might lose none of its Force, will vanish into nothing, if we consider that these were all Prophets or Inspir'd Persons ; and having the Gift of Discerning Spirits, and the Vice-Gerency of God lodg'd in them, they were Commission'd to denounce the Divine Judgments and Curses against the Enemies of God and Religion, and such Offenders, as they knew to be

*Psal. lxix. and 69.* apply'd to *Judas, Act. i. 30.* Impenitent. Most of which also were pronounc'd as Prophecies, and Predictions in the Future Tense, as the Hebrew expresses them, not as Prayers in the Optative, which is only rendred by that Tense, and so, often confounded and mistaken by Translators for it. And till we can produce such immediate Authority and Commission from God, as these Holy Men had

had by Inspiration, their Examples are no ways suited to our Imitation, or sufficient to justify any *Private Revenge*. And the same Rebuke that our Saviour gave to His Disciples, tho' expressing their Zeal in their Master's Quarrel, applying *Elijah's Example* against the *Inhositable Samaritans*, may be a very satisfactory Answer to us, *Ye know not what manner of Spirit ye are of; For the Son of Man came not to destroy Mens Lives, but to save them.* S. Luk. ix. 55.

Having now shown the full Extent and Obligation of this Duty, and answer'd those Objections it may seem liable to, and prescrib'd it within those Limitations it must admit of; I proceed

IV. *Fourthly*, To produce the Reasons and Motives upon which this Duty of Praying for our Enemies is founded, with a particular View to that contain'd in the Text, *For they know not what they do.*

The betraying and murdering our Blessed Saviour was without Dispute the most transcendently wicked Action that ever was, or can be committed by Mortal Man. And yet when S. Peter comes to expostulate this Matter with the Jews, and to aggravate it with its horrible Circumstances, as that *They deliver'd Him in the Presence of Pilate, when he was determin'd to let Him go, but they denied the Holy One* Act. iii. 13, &c. *and the Just, and desir'd a Murderer to be granted unto them, and killed the Prince of Life:* Yet he adds this remarkable Extenuation of so great a Sin, as if he pointed on this very Prayer of our Bleſſed Saviour, *Now Brethren I wot that through Ignorance ye did it, as did also your Rulers.* And agreeably to this S. Paul says, *For they that dwelt at Jeruialem, and their Rulers because they knew Him not, nor yet the Voices of the Prophets* Act. xiii. 27, *which are read every Sabbath-Day, they have fulfilled them in Condemning Him.* And again, *We speak the Wisdom of God in a Mystery which none of the Princes of this World knew; for had they known it, they would not have Crucified the Lord of Glory.* 1 Cor. ii. 8, &c. Not that we must here understand the Apostle, as if this Ignorance wholly excus'd all of them from their Sin; for a most damnable Sin it still remain'd, and therefore they are exhorted to *Repent of it, and be converted, that their Sins might be blotted out.* Act. iii. 19. For this Ignorance of the Person of the *Messiah* was not in some *Invincible*, but grossly *Wilful* and *Affected*, in that they obstinately *shut their Ears to the Scriptures* read continually in their Synagogues, wherein He was so graphically describ'd in all the particular Circumstances of His Birth, Life, Death, and Doctrine, and also shut their Eyes to the Conviction of all those miraculous Signs and Wonders that He wrought; which left them inexcusable in not apprehending Him to be the *Christ*, from such palpable Arguments and plain Predictions fulfill'd in the minutest Tittles in Him. But in others who had not the Assistanſes of Learning and Education, the strong Prejudices they lay under, the Divine Infatuation that was upon ſome, the gross Blindness with which almost the whole *Jewish Nation* was struck at this Time, together with the overbearing Clamours and Rage of the incenſ'd People, driving forward the Perpetration of this horrid Sin, ſo leſſen'd and qualify'd its Guilt in the Sight of God, as to render them the Object of His Mercy, and the Subject of our Saviour's Gracious Intercession; *Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.*

To apply this Argument to ourselves by way of Accommodation. All the Calamities, Affronts, and Sufferings, that the *Best of Men* can receive from the *Worst of Enemies*, can never be presum'd to come into the Balance, or stand

stand in Competition with the least of these that our Blessed Rodeemer underwent. Now, if the *Ignorance* of the *Jews* could be pleaded in their Behalf, and alledg'd as a Motive before God, for the Pardon of such unparallel'd Impieties; how much more Reason have we, poor Mortals, not to insist upon our Resentments, but to be renconcil'd to each other, and to intercede with God for the Forgivenes of those Petty and Rascall Offences which we daily commit one against another, through that *Ignorance* which All, even the *Wise* of us, are liable to, through *Passion*, or *Prejudice*, or *Inadvertency*, or any other *Frailty* or *Infirmitie* of our *Nature*? To one of which Causes, that *Charity* that *bearoth all things*, *believeth all things*, *hopeth all things*, *endureth all things*, will be ever inclinable to impute the little Strife, Variance, and Enmity we meet with in the World. If we can once persuade ourselves to believe that our Adversaries don't *Offend out of malicious Wickedness*; the Sting of the Injury is pluck'd out, and no Wound can be made upon such an *Invulnerable Temper*, which is resolv'd to put the best Construction upon all Accidents that can befall it. Instead of raising Gall and Bitterness, it *Provokes unto Love, and to Good Works*, and gives the good Man an Occasion only of exerting his Tenderness and Compassion. Thus he represents Things under the best Colours they can bear, and makes favourable Allowances for all Casualties, and unfortunate Incidents, that may work up a Quarrel where it was never intended. And, generally speaking, the Experience of the World convinces us, that our Enemy, who is the main Butt of our Spight and Revenge, does the least deserve it in himself; being often only the Engine of other Mens Malice, acted by Incendiaries who stand behind the Curtain, and blow up thole Flames, purely to make their own Advantages of them. For Enmities usually cease when the differing Parties come to understand one another; and if they will hearken to Reason, a Treaty of Peace is the natural Consequence of it. How often does it happen, that Lyes and Slanders, invented and carried from one Side to another, and propagated with Design to set Men into Feuds and Animosities, by misrepresenting their Characters, and rendring them odious, (especially amongst Persons of opposite Parties or Religions) have entirely been defeated upon due Examination, and afterwards prov'd the solid Foundation of Friendship? These must necessarily be the happy Effects of Calmness and Deliberation; but if Men are resolv'd, right or wrong, without any Heed to Truth or Justice, rashly to begin and pu'h on Quarrels, and never consider the *Grounds* or *Consequences* of such unadvis'd and precipitate Actions; we are to consider that we are unfortunately engag'd with Madmen, that, in the very literal Sense of the Words, *know not what they do*; like Drunkards in a Rencounter, they fight in the Dark, and are for doing Mischief they know not why, and stabbing the next Man they meet, for the Crime of being sober, and in his Wits. A wise and good Man would have nothing to do with such Enemies, if he could help it; but if it chances to be his unhappy Lot, he would rather consider them as the Objects of his utmost Pity and Compassion, as *Demoniacks*, and *Lunaticks*, who challenge our Prayers (and not our Resentments) that God would *restore them to their Senses, and to a right Mind*. Besides that it very seldom fails but that such Men do their own Busines, by pursuing their own frantick and wild Measures; and work out their own Ruin in the Prosecution of their Adversaries; and, like the *Jews*, crucify themselves in *crucifying Christ*. If this happens, and they fall into Distress, they are the Objects of our Commiseration, and we ought not to insult them on their Fall; but if they are successful in their Power, the worst Case for them of the Two, they may probably never come to a Sense of their Errors, but go on and die in Impenitence, and so justly demand

mand our Prayers and Intercessions to God in their Behalf ; Father forgive them, for they know not what they do. Thus, if we take Ignorance in the general Import of the Word, as it denotes, either our not understanding, not attending to, or not applying the Knowledge we have of our Duty to God, our Neighbour, and ourselves ; it may justly be reckon'd the chief Source of the Envy, Hatred, and Enmity we find in the World.

Now having done with the Particular Case of the Jews, as far as we can apply it to ourselves, I come next in general to consider the Reasons of this Duty. For tho' our Saviour, in the Text, prays for his Enemies upon a Supposition of their Ignorance ; it not being to be imagin'd that so atrocious a Crime would be pardon'd upon any other Plea ; yet this is not to be presump'd as the Only Case in which His Followers, according to His own Doctrine, are to perform the same Duty, but they are to pray also for their Enemies, even when they know what they do ; when no such Plea as that of Ignorance can be urg'd in their Behalf. For our Lord, in His first Precept of this Kind, delivers Himself in general Terms, without Limitation or Reserve, *Pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you.* I shall therefore proceed to consider this Duty of Praying for our Enemies under the triple Regard it bears

1. To God and Religion.

2. To our Enemies. And,

3. To ourselves.

1. As to the Regard it bears to God and Religion. Among the many Reasons that may be brought from this Topic, I shall select only three. The first is a very cogent one, produc'd by our Saviour Himself on the Instruction of this Duty ; namely, *That it is the highest Imitation of the Divine Nature that mortal Man can attain to, and therefore the most glorious Perfection of a Christian. Pray for those (says Christ) that despitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be the Children of your Father which is in Heaven ; For He maketh His Sun to rise on the Evil and on the Good, and sendeth Rain on the Just and the Unjust.* Mat. v. 44, &c. For if you love them which love you, what Reward have you? do not even Publicans the same? And if you salute your Brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the Publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect. Or as S. Luke varies it, *Your Reward shall be great, and ye shall be the Children of the Highest ; for He is kind unto the Unthankful, and to the Evil.* Isa. xl. 18. Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful. As if this superlative Degree of Divine Benignity and Goodness render'd us the most express Image of God Himself, who dispenses the common Temporal Blessings of his gracious Providence with an Universal Philanthropy, and Liberality, without Distinction, even to His most wicked, ungrateful, and provoking Enemies. This is therefore a Godlike Virtue, advances our Souls to the highest Dignity of which they are capable, and makes them fit for the Beatific Vision, by transforming them into the Similitude of the Divine Glory. In this shall we liken God, and in this Likeness shall we be compar'd unto Him. For if Love be the fulfilling of the Law, this is certainly the most complete fulfilling of Love, and the brightest Resemblance of that blessed Being, who is Love itself, and who seems to delight himself in that amiable, that adorable (and if I may be allow'd so to speak) darling Attribute of His Mercy. I shall close this Point in the eloquent Words of one of the greatest Dr. South. and most learned Writers of our Church, on this Subject. Vol. 3. p. 144. " When I pray as heartily for my Enemy, as I do for my Daily

The Reverend Dr. South.

Vol. 3. p. 144.

" Daily

“ Daily Bread ; when I strive with Prayers and Tears to make God his Friend, who himself will not be mine ; when I reckon his Felicity amongst my own Necessities ; surely this is such a Love, as, in a literal Sense, may be said to reach up to Heaven : To which Words of this exquisite Divine and Orator I will presume to add, could only come down from Heaven also. Which suggests a second Reason this Duty is grounded upon ; namely,

2. That it is the Peculiar Characteristick and Distinguishing Badge of the Christian Profession, above all other Religions in the World. This is a Prayer which none but a Christian can say, and is the Practice of that New-Commandment, by which our Saviour would have His Disciples known, and discriminated among Men. It is so obscurely deducible from the Law of Nature, corrupted as it is, that the wisest Moralists among the Heathens could never raise Virtue to such a Pitch ; To be ayeng'd on our Enemies, was in the Opinion of those two great Gentile Sages, Aristotle and Tully, not only an Act of Justice, but the commendable Property of an Heroic and Valiant Spirit ; And Mahomet, in that bloody System of Cruelty, Lewdness, and Blasphemy, his Alchoran, makes it the necessary Criterion of a Saint. The Precepts even of the Stoicks, the most rigid Sect, could carry Philosophy no higher than to the Subduing our Passions, and patient Enduring all Injuries, and even that out of a stupid Principle of Apathy. Humane Reason could go no farther, till it was improv'd, refin'd, and perfected by Divine Revelation ; And even in the Jewish Law, this Duty was so faintly and weakly inculcated, and such large Allowances granted to that stubborn and spightful People in Case of Retaliation, that the Rabinical Glosses had not only quite effac'd it, but foisted a Precept into its Room, in direct Opposition to it, to hate our Enemy. In Contradiction to which, says our Blessed Saviour,

S. Matt. v. I, that is Emphatically, I the greatest Prophet and Law-Giver that ever came into the World, the great Messenger of Peace,

43.

the Author of the Gospel, the Covenant of Peace, who came to reconcile God to Man, and Men one to another, it is I, that command you this New Commandment ; Love your Enemies, bless them that

Ver. 44. curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you. A Few perhaps might with some Difficulty have forgiven his Enemy ; but to pray for him, and that too when in the midst of Torments and Persecutions, was such an Evangelical Paradox, as none could enjoin, but He who was so Glorious an Example of it too. The Practice of this Duty was such a Shock upon the Primitive Proselytes to Christianity, that nothing stagger'd their Faith so much ; and occasion'd that witty Saying, that Christ's Praying Lazarus out of his Grave, was not half so great a Miracle as His Praying for His Enemies on the Crofs. Yet if we own ourselves Disciples of that Crofs, and expect to be sav'd by the Precious Blood that was shed upon it, we must submit to this its peculiar and indispensable Doctrine. We must not only return Contumelies and Reproaches with Silence or good Language, Injuries with Benefits, Curses with Blessings ; but we must Kiss our Enemy when He is angry, follow the great Captain of our Salvation through all his Sufferings, and pray, that even the merciless Hand that executes us may find Mercy. Which leads me to a Third Reason ; namely,

3. We are oblig'd to pray for our Enemies, because they are the Instruments of God's Justice and Providence here below. We ought in general not only to submit to, but to pray that God's Will may be done in all the various Dispensations of His Power and Wisdom in the Government of the World. And as we must rest assur'd, that the most, seemingly, hard and rough Administrations of it are ordain'd for good and prudent Ends, and, if rightly applied,

applied, will infallibly produce them ; so are we, not only for that Reason to acquiesce in, but to thank God for, their Appointment, still looking up to the superior Agent, and first Principle of Motion, that directs all these second Causes here below ; that can bring Light out of Darkness, over-rule, and, if Occasion be, set aside the Powers and Operations of Nature, and make her bring forth Contrarieties to herself. This settled Notion of the Goodness and Omnipotence of Providence will at all times sanctify and reconcile the severest Afflictions and Troubles to us ; and not only render us easy under their Pressures, but make us even bless the Rod that smites us, and thus chastises us in Mercy for our Benefit and Reformation. As all the Sorrows we endure may be imputed to some Sins, that have previously deserved and brought them down on our Heads ; so if we consider them as only Temporal Punishments, inflicted for the Prevention of Eternal, they must be the greatest Blessings God can send us, and consequently worthy of our Prayers for those who are thus Instrumental in conveying them to us. When these Judgments fall upon us, and we are delivered up into the Power of our Enemies, we ought not to wreak our Malice and Spleen upon them, but return the meek Answer of Old Eli ; *It is the Lord,* 1 Sam. iii. 18; let Him do what seemeth Him good ; or with Job, *The Lord hath given, and the Lord hath taken away ; Blessed be the Name of the Lord.* When David's Guards solicited their King and Master to avenge the Imprecations of Shimei with the Expence of his Life, and to wash away his Blasphemy with his Blood ; with what inimitable Patience, and Good Nature, does that gentle Prince screen the Traitor from their Vengeance, as being a Punishment sent from God upon him ? Then said Abishai the Son of Zeruiab, why should this dead Dog curse my Lord the King ? let me go over I pray thee, and take off his Head. And the King said, What have I to do with you, ye Sons of Zeruiab ? let him curse ; because the Lord hath said unto him, Curse David. Who shall then say ; Wherfore hast thou done so ? When God by His Permissive Providence does not prevent, or by His Active lets loose our Enemies upon us (as He did Rezin and Pekah against Judah) to torment and afflict us for our Crimes, we ought to esteem them as the Officers and Executioners of Divine Justice, and to treat them as His Representatives, lest haply we be found even to fight against God.

There cannot, through the whole History, both of the Jewish and Christian Church, be produc'd two more lively Instances of this Duty of Praying for our Enemies under the most galling and vexatious Circumstances imaginable, than what we read of the One under its State of Captivity, and the Other under its Primitive Persecution. Take the Matter thus excellently set forth in the Words of our Church. Will you hear the Scriptures concerning this most necessary Point ?

" I exhort therefore ( saith S. Paul ) that above all things, " Prayers, Supplications, Intercessions, and giving of Thanks, " be had for all Men ; for Kings, and all that are in Authority ; " that we may live a quiet and peaceable Life with all God- " lines : for that is good and acceptable in the Sight of God our Saviour, &c." This is S. Paul's Counsel. And who, I pray you, was Prince over the most Part of the Christians, when God's Holy Spirit, by S. Paul's Pen, gave them this Lesson ? Forsooth, Caligula, Claudius, or Nero, who were not only no Christians, but Pagans, and most cruel Tyrants. Will you yet hear the Word of God to the Jews, when they were Prisoners

Part i. of the Hom. against Reb.

I Tim. ii.

" under

" under Nebuchadonosor King of Babylon, after he had slain their King,  
 " Nobles, Parents, Children, and Kinsfolks, buried their Country, Cities,  
 " yea Jerusalem itself, and the Holy Temple, and had carried the Residue,  
 " remaining alive, Captives with him into Babylon? Will you hear yet  
 " what the Prophet Baruch saith unto God's People, being in this Captivity?

Bar. i. 2.    " Pray you, saith the Prophet, for the Life of Nebuchadonosor  
 " King of Babylon, and for the Life of Balthasar his Son,

   " that their Days may be as the Days of Heaven upon Earth;  
 " that God also may give us Strength, and lighten our Eyes, that we  
 " may live under the Defence of Nebuchadonosor King of Babylon, and un-  
 " der the Protection of Balthasar his Son, that we may long do them Service,  
 " and find Favour in their Sight: Pray for us also unto the Lord our God,  
 " for we have sinned against the Lord our God. Thus far the Prophet Baruch  
 " his Words, which are spoken by him unto the People of God, of that  
 " King who was an Heathen, a Tyrant, and cruel Oppressor of them; and  
 " had been a Murtherer of many Thousands of their Nation, and a De-  
 " stroyer of their Country, with a Confession that their Sins had deserved  
 " such a Prince to reign over them. To which I shall add the Words of

Jeremy to the same People under the same Circumstances:  
 Jer. xxix. 7. Seek ye the Peace of the City whither I have caused you  
 to be carried away Captives, and pray unto the Lord for it;  
 for in the Peace therewithal shall ye have Peace. To conclude this Head; As our  
 Enemies are sent us by God, (accidentally and unknowingly as to them) for  
 the Scourges of our Sins, they are the great Objects of our Compassion and  
 Prayers, lest by being employ'd as the Vessels of God's Wrath against us  
 here, they may, by their own Injustice, Cruelty, and Malice, be also In-  
 struments of their own Destruction, and Vessels of Eternal Wrath hereafter.  
 Which brings me in the next Place,

1. To consider farther this Duty, as it regards our Enemy himself. We must still allow him to be our Brother, and consequently intitl'd to our Affection, and Prayers. For his Enmity can never deprive him of his Humanity, or efface the Image of God stamp'd on his Person. But perhaps he may be join'd to us under a nearer and more sacred Alliance, as he is a Member of the same Body, as he is redeem'd by the same Blood, as he is a Servant of the same God and Church, as he is a Subject of the same Government and Country, and involv'd in the same Common Interests and Happiness with ourselves: Upon all which Accounts, whatever Injuries or Wrongs he may have done us in Private, he can never be excluded our Prayers for the Publick Good.

2. Praying for our Enemy may be the most effectual Means of his Conversion and Reconciliation both to God, and ourselves. S. Paul says, If thine Enemy hunger, feed him, if he thirsts, give him drink, Rom. xii. 20. for in so doing thou shalt heap Coals of Fire on his Head. Now if so small a Token of Kindness can mollify and melt down the obdurate Heart of a relenting Adversary; certainly such a noble and exalted Instance of our Love, when we apply to Heaven in his behalf, and call down Omnipotence to his Succour, is enough to break the most flinty Constitution, and like Moses's Rod, to dissolve even a Rock of Strife into Tears. Kindness and Patience may conquer what Force and Power cannot; it could disarm Esau of his Hatred, and the Syrians of their Revenge, and gain that Victory by Friendship, which never could be obtain'd by War. The Amalekites we know were discomfited more by Moses's Hands held up in Prayer, than by the Sword of Joshua; which receiv'd all its fatal Edge and Execution from the deadly Voice of the Prophet. Such is the Power of Prayer that

nothing can withstand it. What Miracles have not been wrought by the Intercessions of those great Favourites of Heaven, *Noah, David, Elias, Job, Jeremy, and Daniel*, whose Prayers have sav'd Nations, diverted the Anger of God, and over-rul'd the Powers of Nature? How many Millions fell by the bended Knees of an *Asa, Jebozaphat, or Hezekiah*? Could not the Supplications of a Pious *Queen Esther* deliver her People, and even of a wicked, tho' repenting, *Manasses* restore his Kingdom? If the Prayers of Faith can save the Sick, and the fervent effectual Prayer of S. *Jam. v. 15*, a Righteous Man availeth much; What Success may we not promise ourselves will such efficacious Prayers find, that are put up to God for so Pious and Religious an End as this? They cannot return empty; they must take Heaven by an Holy Violence, and, like *Jacob*, wrestle with God, till they obtain the Blessing. So powerful was this Prayer of our Saviour upon the Cross, that as a Learn'd Prelate observes, in the Space of Fifty five Days, it converted Eight thousand of His Enemies. And very probably to that affectionate Intercession of S. *Stephen* (who so exactly trod in His Blessed Master's Steps) may be attributed the Conversion of *Saul*, that violent Persecutor of the Church, into *Paul* the no less Zealous Apostle of it; who saw the barbarous Murder, and was consenting when he heard those Prayers that would have made his Executioners relent, had not their Hearts been harder than the Stones which they pour'd on his Innocent Head. As the quick and wonderful Propagation of the Gospel in the World under the Gracious Influence of God's Spirit and Providence may be justly imputed to the Zeal, Steadiness, and Resolution of those Glorious Ecclesiastical Heroes, that Noble Army of Martyrs, who follow'd Christ their Captain in Crimson Robes, and seal'd the Faith with their Blood; so did it receive no little Advancement from the Meekness of their Sufferings, and that Divine Charity, wherewith they recommended their Persecutors to God's Pardon and Mercy. Every Page in the Sacred Annals shines with such Illustrious Examples; but certainly that which Eclipses all the lesser Lights of the Church, and comes the nearest up to that Holy Pattern I have been endeavouring to describe, is, that of the Royal Martyr; whose Death, had it preceded that of Jesus Christ, would have seem'd as true a Type of it, as it was the exact Transcript and Representation of it afterwards; whether we consider the barbarous Indignities he suffer'd in his Life, the intolerable Insolence and Affronts he endur'd in his Arraignment, Trial, and Condemnation, or the shameful and cruel Manner of his Execution, as the vilest of Slaves, and worst of Malefactors. In all which, the King, and the Christian were so well mixt and temper'd, Majesty and Humility, Magnanimity and Meekness, Patience and Charity, Constancy in Faith, and Fervency in Devotion; as would have broken the Heart of any Enemy, but such implacable Blood-thirsty Savages, that were equally bereav'd of Humane Nature and Divine Grace. Or how could such Monsters without Shame and Confusion of Face, and Abhorrence of their own detestable Villany, see this Imperial Saint lay down his Crown and Life upon the Block, and hear these last Dying Words? " To shew you ( says the Blessed King ) That I am a good Christian, I have forgiven all the World; and even those in Particular that have been the chief Causers of my Death; who they are, God knows; I do not desire to know, I pray God forgive them. But this is not all, my Charity must go farther; I wish that they may repent, for indeed they have committed a great Sin in that Particular. I pray God, with S. Stephen, that this be not laid to their Charge. Nay, not only so, but that they may take the right Way to the Peace of the Kingdom; for my Charity commands me not only to forgive particular Men, but my Charity commands me to endeavour to the last Gasp the Peace of the Kingdom.

Now, if we share the Misfortune of this most Pious and truly Christian Prince, to con. end with such untractable, ungrateful, and irreconcileable Enemies, whom no Overtures of Reason, Kindness, or Condescension can persuade or subdue, but who will inexorably hold out, and are resolved to be Deaf both to our Prayers and Entreaties, and when we propose Terms of Peace, make themselves ready to Battle; we have acquitted ourselves both before God and Man, we have done our Parts, and may leave them as *inexcusable*, to the disposal of Providence; which if it does not convert their Hearts, will, at least, tye up their Hands, and clog the Chariot-Wheels of such obdurate Pharoabs, that they shall not drive so furiously against us. But 'tis to be hop'd, tho' the World is very wicked, there are but few such Prodigies in Nature to be found. And let us consider, if our Prayers should meet with that happy Success we wish for and endeavour; what a Blessed Comfort and Satisfaction will it be to us in this Life, to have counter-plotted and defeated the Devil's Designs, to have rescu'd the Souls of our poor Brethren out of eternal Perdition, to have made Proselytes and Servants to God, Friends instead of Enemies to ourselves, and Heirs to that Everlasting Bliss and Glory, to which we entitle ourselves by this Great Act of Charity.

*S. Jam. v. 20.* know, that if we thus convert a Sinner from the Error of his way, we shall save a Soul from Death, and shall bide a Multitude of our own Sins; and shall shine like Stars for ever and ever. Charity therefore to ourselves would induce us to exercise this Charity of our Enemies, which is attended with such an infinite and inexpressible Reward, which will thus requite Mercy with Mercy, Pardon in Heaven with Pardon on Earth, and will be as 'twere a Transfer of our Devts upon the Forgiveness of our Brother. This, indeed, is laying up a Store for ourselves, a good Foundation against the Time to come, a Reward in the Day of Necessity, that we may attain eternal Life.

3. A third Reason to move us to pray for our Enemies is, because they so highly stand in need of our Prayers, as Sinners against us; and can't without our Intercession, so easily, at least, be pardon'd by God. We are commanded by the Apostle, to confess our Faults one to another, and to pray one for another, that we may be heal'd. Which Injunction particularly respects the Office of the Sick, who could neither ordinarily receive Absolution from their Sins, or a Cure of their Distemper, without a particular Confession of the One, and the Prayers of the Church for the Other, which in those Primitive Times were Miraculous in their Operations, Restoring the Sick without any farther Remedies. But then 'twas a Necessary Condition, as well as now, to obtain the Peace of God, and real Comfort to Peccant Souls, not only to be reconcil'd to the whole World, and particularly to those they had injur'd, but to beseech God also to forgive All those they themselves had been injur'd by; without which, no one could receive Absolution, or be admitted to the Holy Sacrament. But tho' this may in particular respect the Office of the Sick, it equally obliges all in Health, whose Salvation depends on the same Terms. We are all bound to pray for each other, for the mutual Pardon of our Offences. And these Intercessions are requir'd, not only from our Superiors, who may seem to have more Interest and Favour in the Court of Heaven; but also from Inferiors, for those that are above them. The Apostles themselves, who we may think had very little need of other Mens Prayers, very frequently request to be recommended to God by the Prayers of the faithful.

*Rom. xv. 30;* Now, I beseech you Brethren (says that chosen Vessel of God, S. Paul) for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the Love of the Spirit, that ye strive

strive together with me in your Prayers to God for me. And again, Praying al-ways with all Prayer and Supplication in the Spirit, and watch-ing thereunto with all Perseverance and Supplication for all Eph. vi. 18. Saints ; And for me, that Utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my Mouth boldly to make known the Mystery of the Gospel. And so in several other Places. Now if the very best of Men thus stand in need of the Prayers of others so much below themselves in Vertue and Religion (and we can't suppose the Apostle thus importunately to have begg'd for a Thing of no Effect) and these Prayers are as 'twere the necessary Ad-dresses to obtain these Blessings from the Throne of Grace ; How much more highly requisite will be the Petitions of those that suffer under Injuries, for those that are the sinful Authors of them ? I will not presume to carry this Point too far, so as to assert they cannot be forgiven without it : But I con-fess, from some Passages of Scripture, there seems some Reason to conclude, that if this Intercession is not absolutely requisite, for the Remission of our Ad-versaries Offence, 'tis, at least, a very great and prevailing Motive with God for it. To make this Matter a little clear ; we read that when Abimelech had only intended to have defil'd Abraham's Wife, Gen. xx. not knowing her to be so, but mistaking her, according to their own Prevarication, for his Sister, that when God threatened to punish him severely, for this his intended Injustice, tho' he was not con-scious of the Heinousness of his Crime ; he sends him to Abraham to intercede for his Pardon, for he is a Prophet (says God) and he shall pray for thee, and thou shalt live : and if thou restore her Ver. 7.

not, know thou that thou shalt surely die : thou and all that are thine. And accordingly we find that God rever'd His Judgment upon Abraham's Prayer. When the Jews had so highly provok'd God in the Ab-sence of Moses, their General, on the Mount, against whom they had not only rebelled, but against God by Idolatry, it is very Remarkable that when that meek Prophet interceded with God for their Pardon, offering his own Life, as a Sacrifice, and Ransom for theirs ; God Almighty replys, Let me alone, that my Wrath may wax hot against them. As if the Divine Power was arrested and suspended upon his Prayer, and the Lord hearken'd to the Voice of a Man, to stop the Course of his Justice, and Providence. When that wicked King Jeroboam stretch'd forth his Arm to smite the Prophet at Bethel, the Lord dried up his sacrilegious Hand, so that he could not put it in again to him ; and there it stood a wither'd Monument of Divine Vengeance, till restor'd by the healing Voice and Intercession of his Adversary. I shall produce but one In-stance more, and that is the remarkable Case of Job ; which speaks very fully to the Point before us. When God intended to have revenged his Quarrel against his false Friends, who had so basely insulted and abus'd him in his Misfortune, he would not accept their Sacrifice or Repen-tance, but by the Mediation of Job himself. Take unto you now cap. xlvi. 8, (says God) seven Bullocks, and seven Rams, and go to my &c. Servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a Burnt-Offering, and my Servant Job shall pray for you, for him will I accept : lest I deal with you after your Folly, in that you have not spoken of me the thing which is right, like my Servant Job. So Eliphaz the Temanite, and Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite went and d'd according as the Lord com-manded them, the Lord also accepted Job ; And the Lord turn'd the Captivity of Job when he pray'd for his Friends. The Divine Procedure in this Matter does, at least, warrant this Conclusion, That tho' God may, if he pleases,

leaves, without our Prayers, pardon our Enemies on their Repentance, yet that our Prayers for them are of mighty Force and Prevalence with God, to obtain the Acceptation of their Persons, and Repentance, and to render their Admission to the Throne of Grace ( if I may be allowed so to speak ) more easy and Satisfactory. I desire here not to be misunderstood ; nor that either our Prayers, or their Repentance can be at all available, or acceptable for them, or ourselves, in the Sight of God, but through the Merits and Satisfaction of our Great and Only Mediator Christ Jesus ; to the Benefit of whose Mediation and Intercession for ourselves we cannot lay any Claim, without this indispensable Duty of Intercession for our Enemies. This therefore must be so understood, as a conditional, and subordinate Means here below, to qualify us for that Absolution above. There are some Sins that, as all Casuists agree, require Restitution in order to Remission, such as Extortion, Fraudulent Gains, and the like ; and others that are almost incapable of it, as Murder and Adultery. In both these dreadful Cases, not only the Forgiveness, but the Prayers also of the Person injur'd ( where they may be had ) may possibly be very Conducive towards, if not requisite for the Pardon of the Person Injuring. Doubtless, both join'd together are of more Weight, and Efficacy ; and may be look'd upon as a Composition in Ordinary Course of Justice, and accepted instead of plenary Satisfaction, and so Cancel the Debt, and Obligation on the Offenders Side. If therefore we have any Regard to the Souls, or Bodies of our Enemies, we must Pray for the One Labouring under the Convictions of Sin and Guilt, that the Other may also be deliver'd from those Just Judgments the Divine Vengeance may otherwise inflict upon them for our Sakes. And what an Honourable and Blessed Office is this ! to stand subordinately in the Place of our Redeemer ; to deprecate God's Wrath, and reconcile Man to God ; to step in, and interpose Mercy betwixt vindictive Justice, and Punishments ; and like the Angel with Abraham, to intercept the impending Sword, and skreen the Sacrifice on the Altar. From the Great and Good Service we may do to our Enemies, by our Prayers for them, I come in the last Place,

Thirdly. To consider this Duty as it relates to ourselves. And here we shall find it still supported by more affecting, and beneficial Reasons, drawn from our own Welfare, and Concerns. And first then,

I. We are to pray for our Enemies, because of the great Profit and Advantages we may reap from them in the good Offices they do us. If Affliction is the School of Virtue, our Enemies are to be esteem'd, as only our Masters, or Tutors set over us for Admonition, Instruction, and Correction of our Faults. And tho' the Discipline is rough, and unpalatable, and irksome to Flesh and Blood, yet it has its medicinal Qualities, and if rightly apply'd, will prove the best Physick we can take. The Holy Psalmist who to his great Sorrow had tasted deep of this bitter Cup, and whose whole Life was almost one continued Scene of Trouble and Vexation from his Enemies, tells us the great Improvement and Experience that he had gain'd from them, and particularly from that Blood-thirsty Adversary Saul, in whose Court he so long

*liv'd, had made him wiser than the Aged. Thou ( says he ) Psal. cxix. 98, through thy Commandments hast made me wiser than mine*

*Enemies, for they are ever with me ; I have more Understanding than all my Teachers, and therefore, says he, it is good for*

*me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy Statutes.*

When a Man is thus set in the midst of Snare, and Dangers, he walks upon the Battlements of a City under围攻 and ought to take

take good Heed to his Paths, when his prying and inquisitive Enemies are ready to swallow him up ; when they wrest his Psal. lvi. 5, 6. Words, and all their Thoughts are against him for Evil, when they gather themselves together, and hide themselves, and mark his Steps, when they wait for his Soul. When he is certain that all the Errors and Miscarriages of his Life shall be laid open, his Frailties, Ignorances, and Infirmitie magnified into wilful and presumptuous Sins, and his Good Name loaden with Lyes and Slanders, and all the Artillery of that Accuser of the Brethren pour'd on his guiltless Head. Then let him set Scourges over his Thoughts, and the Discipline of Wisdom over his Heart; lest he fall before his Adverfaries, and his Enemies rejoice over him. It will require his utmost Prudence and Caution to ride out the Storm, and weather such a Day of Trouble, and of Rebuke and Blasphemy. This is the Season to exercise his Christian Vertues, when he is examin'd with Despifefulness and Torture, that his Meekness may be known, and his Patience proved ; this is the Time to call Wisd. ii. 19. upon God for a double Portion of his Spirit, for Faith and Perseverance, for Humility and Constancy, for an ardent Love of God, and Zeal for His Glory, a firm Trust in His Providence, and Resignation to His Will, with an equal Contempt of the Frowns and Temptations, the Allurements, or Sufferings of this World, when put in Oppofition to his Duty, the Defence of the Truth, or the Discharge of a good Conscience. The Comfort of which will bear him up above, and carry him thro' all the Torment, Disgrace, and Barbarity, the Malice of Men or Devils can invent, and bring him off more than Conqueror, thro' Christ that strengthens him. This indeed is a fiery Furnace, wherein the Virtue of a Christian is tried even as Silver is tried, and out of which it will come with its true Sterling Weight, and Lustre. Now tho' these are the Accidental Effects of our Sufferings from our Enemies, wrought in us by the Grace of God, and quite contrary to their Designs and Intentions ; yet a kind of Justice and Gratitude would oblige us to intercede with God for their Pardon, who have been the Occasions of doing us so much good, that we may say, *It is not an Enemy that has done this, but it was thou my best Friend, who by laying wait for my Soul, hast been a great Instrument in saving it.*

Lastly, We must pray for our Enemies, because it is enjoin'd by God, as the absolute Condition of Praying for ourselves. If thou bring thy Gift to the Altar ( says our Saviour ) and there remembrest that thy Brother hath ought against thee ; leave there thy Gift before the Altar, and go thy way, first be reconcil'd to thy Brother, and then come and offer thy Gift. So that an entire Reconciliation with our Adversaries is a necessary Qualification for us to approach God's Altar for the Atonement of our own Sins ; without which, we are not fit to come into the Divine Presence ; it is that Wedding Garment, which if we are not cloath'd withal, we must be so far from expecting to be acceptable Guests at the Holy Table, that we shall be cast out into outer Darkness. Nay the Want of this does not only put in a Bar against our own Pardon, but it turns our very Prayers into Sin ; it renders them the most dreadful Curse, and Imprecation upon our own Souls, that our most bitter Enemy the Devil himself could utter. For by this we Bind and Seal our own Sins upon ourselves, we pray Damnation on ourselves even in the Lord's Prayer ; and make a Covenant with God for our eternal Destruction, if we don't fulfil the Condition we stipulate, to forgive in as full Terms, as we expect to be forgiven. If we will have our Prayers heard for ourselves, we must earnestly Desire to have them heard for our Enemies ; we must labour for their Salvation, to secure our own ; and therefore God forbid that we shoud sin in ceasing to pray for them.

Thus

1 Sam. xii. 23.

Thus I have endeavour'd to press upon you the Practice of this great Duty from some of the most weighty Reasons it is founded upon, with Regard to God, and Religion, our Enemies, and ourselves. I have shewn it to be the greatest Imitation of God, and the most Glorious Perfection of a Christian; that it is the peculiar and distinguishing Mark of our Profession; that we are oblig'd to consider our Enemies to be the Instruments of God's Justice and Providence; that they are our Brethren in Nature, in Government and Religion; that this is the most likely Means to work their Conversion, and Reconciliation to God and Man; that they most highly stand in Need of our Prayers as Sinners against us, and can't be so easily pardon'd without our Intercession; that if rightly made use of, they may prove Occasions of great Benefits to us in the Exercises of our Christian Graces; and lastly, that we can't pray for ourselves unless we pray for our Enemies.

I am conscious how much I have tir'd out your Patience with this tedious Discourse; but I hope it may be pardon'd upon so particular an Occasion, especially considering that I am now pleading for a Duty, which all the Arguments and Eloquence in Nature are, God knows, but little enough to enforce.

To conclude then; since neither *Innocence*, nor *Piety*, nor *Wisdom* can secure the best of Men from Enemies, let us patiently bear that Cross which even the Son of God did not disdain to submit to. And whatever Sufferings God shall be pleas'd to permit them to inflict upon us, let us receive them with Meekness, and Pity, and endeavour to overcome Evil with Good, by requiting their Malice with Kindness and Friendship. In order to which, we must suppress all the inordinate Motions of our Passions, and stifle the very first Risings of Anger and Revenge in our Hearts. And as we must not over-rate the Injuries we receive from them; so neither must we revile their Persons, or misrepresent their Characters, as knowing that if Mercy, certainly Justice, is due even to our worst Enemies. But whatever Afflictions, or Oppressions they may bring on us; let us put our Trust in God, and not fear what Man can do unto us. Let us hold fast our Integrity and Profession without wavering, and never for Fear, Shame, or Interest relinquish a good Cause; and let us take such Care of our Lives, that our Conscience may not reproach us with deserving such Enemies, but that in the great Day of Account we may appear Blameless, and They may be found Liars unto us. In a word, since this Duty requires such a Sublimity of Temper, and such a Firmness and Majesty of Mind, as nothing but the Divine Grace can impart; we must have constant Recourse to God in Prayer for it, that He would lead us in His Righteousness because of our Enemies, and make his Way clear before our Face; and by continued Mortification and Self-Denial prepare ourselves for it, always referring our Cause to God as the proper Judge, and resting entirely contented in the Determinations of

**Psal. v. 9.** His good Providence: Which if our Ways please the Lord, will make our Enemies to be at Peace with us; and will either support us under, or deliver us out of their Hands. If God

**Prov. xvi. 7.** chasten us, he will scourge our Enemies a thousand Times more, to the Intent that when we judge, we should carefully think of his Goodness; and when we ourselves are judg'd, we shoul'd look for Mercy.

**Wisd. xii. 22.** Put on therefore (as the Elect of God Holy and Beloved) Bowels of Mercy, Kindness, Humbleness of Mind, Meekness, Long-Suffering; forbearing one another; if any Man have a Quarrel against any, even as Christ forgave and pray'd for you, so also do ye. And above all Things, put on Charity, which is the Bond of Perfectness; and let the Peace of God rule in your Hearts.

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